

REFLECTIONS

ON

ITINERARY PARLIAMENTS :

BY

MARULLUS.

"Men shall deal unadvisedly sometimes.
Which after-hours give leisure to repent."—RICHARD III.

MONTREAL :

B. DAWSON, GREAT ST. JAMES STREET.

1856.

HOLLO CAMPBELL, PRINTER.

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Henry J. Morgan
ON
1865

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TO

THE CITIZENS OF MONTREAL,

TO

ALL WHO PAY EITHER DUTY OR TAX,

AND

TO EVERY ONE DESIROUS OF THE HONOR AND PROSPERITY OF

OUR COUNTRY,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

THE author feels no occasion for apology in bringing these Reflections before his countrymen, and as little perhaps for stating anything which might recommend them to their perusal. Having in his childhood been an eye-witness to many of the events noticed in the following pages, they naturally impressed themselves on his mind with a force such as is peculiar to that period of life. Since he has grown up to youth, however, these impressions have ceased to be purely historical, and by giving rise to meditation on the origin and consequences of those events, have inclined him to the step which he now takes.

He simply trusts that those who differ from him most widely in *sensitment*, will be unable to point out any misstatement of *fact*; and that a *youth* will be pardoned for having observed imprudence and folly, which a little explanation would make apparent to the merest *child*.

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INTRODUCTION.

MANY and various are the reasons why our country should be to us a source of pride and satisfaction ; and amongst them we might number its soil, its waters, its forests—all, in fact, whereby Nature has either infused vigour into her limbs, and fertility into her womb, or traced those lineaments of beauty which grace her countenance. On these, however, the Indian might have prided himself equally with ourselves : we must regard them in their true light, as His witnesses, "who has made the earth and all things therein." It is in the adaptation of Nature's raw material—in peopling her vast farms, and in assigning the rights and contriving the happiness of these people, that man has scope for displaying any of that subordinate power and wisdom of which he can boast.

If, then, we consider the point of Government alone, our position is enviable in the extreme. As compared with the Monarchical form of Government of our mother-country, or the Republican form in the United States, (undoubtedly the two best in existence,) we are free from the defects which the partisans of each country have pointed out in the other's constitution. If, as is pretended, there be something detrimental, and in fact oppressive, in the aristocracy of the one, we experience as little of it as of the undoubted evils of democracy which manifest themselves in the other. The franchise in the one is unquestionably too narrow ; in the other we have a worse evil in its being too extensive ; whilst ours, though partaking of the nature of things human, in being imperfect, is the most happy medium that has been attained in this direction. Over-population, and other causes, have in the one contributed to what the Americans have been pleased to style "white slavery"—in the other there presents its hideous features, a slavery that is pre-eminently *black*. In our country, the felon and idiot alone are restrained from the enjoyment of a liberty which would be injurious to themselves and to society : and the lash which *we* find most useful is that which, as Burke has said, makes good warriors, good orators, good poets—the birch rod. *We* have no festering ulcer which one-half of the people is striving to spread and the other to cure—no cause of dissension, making the debates of our representatives undignified and ferocious, retarding the despatch of public business, and threatening to divide our interests. If the pot-house politician quarrels with his neighbour, it must be on the propriety of a tariff, or some such measure ; and the most fruitful source of contention amongst our members of Parliament, is a very pleasant one indeed—the fair distribution of the public money.

But above all, we are blessed in our connection with a country whose glorious triumphs in peace and in war might alone sustain the reputation of a world—and to share in whose very misfortunes is an honour. No word, indeed, can better express her relation to ourselves than that of—parent. She has lavished on us kindness, and more substantial favours.

The desire of managing our own affairs, so characteristic of youth, she has beneficently complied with. Possessing little in ourselves, she gives us the greatest pleasure of an affectionate child—pointing to the achievements of his parent. It is on this account that we are not only not guilty of brazen presumption in claiming Shakspeare, Cromwell, and Milton, as our own, but can couple with such names those of Nelson, Chatham, and Wellington.

From all that we have said, one might be led to infer, that if our country be in its childhood, it must have enjoyed an unexampled degree of health. Yet such is not the case. That condition of our country of which we are speaking is its present one, in which the bloom of youth is returning, after a sickly infancy. Hear a short recital of her past maladies. First she suffered from the effects of bad nursing, and rickets were the natural result. But being of a strong constitution, she continued to grow; though after a slow and crooked fashion, it must be confessed. Much concern was expressed that a child which bid so fair should grow up unsightly and deformed. Accordingly, the doctors have directed their attention to her case, and that with happy result, by adopting two shoulder braces of a peculiarly ingenious construction. Indeed, one can hardly believe how they have straightened and strengthened her back. Her teething was unusually severe, in fact the most critical period through which she has passed; but the prompt administration of proper remedies had its usual effect. From that time forward, the only pains which she has felt, (with the exception, of course, of debility occasioned by the rickets,) were growing pains; and nothing serious befel her until some sudden attacks of diarrhoea were bringing her into a very weak state. Happily, this was a disease which her mother thoroughly understood, and she, very properly, taking the treatment into her own hands, speedily restored her to convalescence, by the aid of some pills of a timely and tightening character. Shortly after she met with an unlucky accident, in which she was severely scorched, and agreeably with the proverbial dread which a burnt child has of the fire, she fled from the spot which she had delighted to honour, and has since been travelling about, ostensibly, for the sake of her health, but really, at great expense to her friends, who have, in fact, been too indulgent. This bad habit of body, this *errant* humour it is which must be cured: and as we have directed some little attention to its origin, its injurious effects, and the best means of its eradication, we must be pardoned for stating the result of our investigations.

In other words, as the questions of the Seignorial Tenure and Clergy Reserves are in such a fair way of being settled, and especially, as our attachment to Great Britain proves firm and unwavering, we consider that we have reason to be content, and therefore happy. We are nevertheless called on to affirm, that a most ridiculous abuse has been suffered, in the shape of Itinerary Parliaments—a system which we shall make it our main object to exhibit as *totally uncalled for*;—therefore, then, expensive, and calling aloud for its own abolition, as is admitted on every hand.

REFLECTIONS

ON

ITINERARY PARLIAMENTS.

To view the system of Itinerary Parliaments in a clear and true light, we must not only consider that portion of our history of which the Rebellion Losses Bill is the representative measure, but will find it advantageous briefly to recur to the events of a previous period. Accordingly, passing over the Rebellion for the present, we come to the Union of the two Provinces, which was effected in 1840. This auspicious measure was carried out under the administration of Lord Sydenham, and consisted in combining the Legislative Council and House of Assembly of Upper Canada, with the Special Council of Lower Canada, into a new Legislature, in which both Provinces are equally represented.—And here a reflection arises, to which we cannot but give expression. Shall the reign of our beloved Sovereign be allowed to expire, without an *attempt*, at least, being made, to unite these British American Colonies? Let us rather hope that her reign will be long, (glorious it cannot but be,) so long, that every obstacle being removed, this happy consummation may crown it with a halo, whose effulgence will outshine the blood-red glare of victory—a halo whose radius shall be commensurate with that of time.

The Sessions of this Legislature were held at Kingston, up to the year 1844, when they were transferred to Montreal. As we have had no opportunity of seeing the Parliamentary records of that period, we are unable to state the motives which prompted this change, or to notice the interesting debates to which its proposal must have given rise. But as we are sure that the inhabitants of Kingston had not,

by bespattering the panels of the gubernatorial carriage with unsavoury eggs, or breaking the firm courage of ministers, at the same time with their windows, and those of the pet journal, branded themselves criminals above even the most guilty inmates of her Penitentiary; (that palace of many, whose bones should long ago have been mouldering in the grave of the murderer or abandoned villain,) as they had not done this, we say, we are at liberty to suppose that the same motives ruled the counsels of the Legislature, which would have guided a Board of Arbitration composed of persons as little acquainted with the affairs of our corner of this sublunar world, as the inhabitants of the moon must be. The same peculiarities of position—of natural and artificial beauty—of commercial prosperity—of prospects typical of what was to be desired for our country—all, in short, which goes to make up the requisites of a capital, would be sought after by each. It must have been such qualifications as these that fixed the legislative choice on Montreal, and not that timidity which, under pretence of chastising the barbarity of Vandals, (of which more anon) sought to allay its palpitations, by distributing the weight of its alternate favours on the shoulders of two ready supporters.

Let our representatives then, give this fact its due weight, in those stormy hours which must needs accompany the last gasp of Itinerary Parliaments—that at a time when men's minds were not influenced by mistaken notions, the offspring of excitement, Montreal was, after due deliberation, decided to be best fitted for the Seat of Government.

We will next in thought wend our way to a spot of historic interest. Aye, there it is covered with its long line of shambles. Not so, once, however. Formerly a pile reared its head, whose halls re-echoed to the tread of many who are not left without representatives in the various animals whose carcasses are exposed for sale, or it may be in the costermonger's donkey that brays without. The comparison need be carried no further, for we hope that anything like buying and selling, barter, peddling, and the petty tricks of hucksters, have been confined to its latter and worse estate. And we write this with the more pleasure, when we reflect that the voices of many others resounded in those council-chambers, who, having ever devoted their time, their experience, and their wisdom, to the interests of our growing country, vehemently opposed the system which forms the subject of our investigation. But the most grateful reminiscence undoubtedly is, that it was frequently honoured with the presence of one who

exhibited a firmness which might have served as an example to one of his successors;—one whose name and memory are to be cherished equally with those of Wolfe and Sydenham. The building to which we refer, is of course the Parliament House, which once stood in this City on the site now occupied by St. Ann's Market. That was at a time when men fondly imagined they had fixed on a capital which their latest posterity might regard with veneration, as the source whence had emanated laws and improvements—as a spot invested with associations of much that was to be memorable in the annals of their country. Monklands, too, so unrivalled in the magnificence of its prospect, (and whose sylvan beauty alone would have detained any but an Elgin,) was to be the seat of our Colonial Court—our Canadian Windsor—and not, as it now is, an unfruitful school of superstition, under the tutelage of the Papal Goddess.

But circumstances arising out of a measure, which will be recorded in Canadian history as the Rebellion Losses Bill, amply proved the vanity of human imaginations, by altering the case with a facility altogether characteristic. The first steps in relation to any measure of this kind, were taken so far back as the year 1844, when the Conservative Ministry set apart funds, accruing from tavern and other licenses, for the payment of Rebellion Losses in Upper Canada. In this they were supported by the concurrence of the French Canadian members, who obtained the promise of a similar settlement for the Lower Province. Accordingly, one of Lord Metcalfe's last public acts was the appointing a commission, empowered to investigate the claims of certain of Her Majesty's subjects in Lower Canada, who had sustained losses during the Rebellion in that Province. A month afterwards Earl Cathcart renewed the Commission, with an extension of its powers, and a more strict definition of its duties. On the 18th of April in the following year, this Commission gave in a report of their proceedings to the Legislature. We need not notice its details: suffice it to say, that many claims proved totally unfounded, and the remainder, as might have been expected, were so extravagant, that the Commissioners named a sum equal to less than half what was demanded, as amply sufficient to compensate all aggrieved parties.

With reference to the nature and occasion of these losses, we may observe, that though a considerable portion of them might be more properly styled claims, and more particularly those made for the quartering of troops, &c.: nevertheless, the greater part resulted from the heat and genius of that troublous period. It was then, as

it has ever been in times of excitement. Errors were numerous and hourly. Feeling and impulse swayed men's bosoms, whilst reason and calm judgment appeared to mould neither their plans nor their actions. The *present* engrossed their attention, to the complete exclusion of the *future*. They acted as if actions were not followed by consequences, and entirely failed to avail themselves of that wisdom which is to be gained from the lessons of the past. Accordingly, we find that both the regulars, and most especially the volunteers, indiscriminately destroyed the property of the French Canadians—a name at that time synonymous with rebel. They did not reflect that what they must have regarded as praiseworthy in the extreme, might be the cause of infinite trouble on some future occasion, when the injured parties came to demand compensation, on the ground of their having taken no *active* part in the Rebellion. If we bear these facts in mind, it will materially aid us in comprehending much which we shall have to notice.

The report above spoken of, was considered too vague and unsatisfactory to form a basis for legislation, and a space of three years elapsed before public tranquillity was disturbed by the final action taken upon it. But those in power must have seen enough during that period to convince them of the trouble which must inevitably arise on any attempt to satisfy these claims. Indeed, we imagine that nothing but such considerations could have made them so tardy in redressing what they regarded as wrongs—wrongs, moreover, of such long standing. Here were men who (to be sure) had not borne arms against their Sovereign, (and whose daughters, perhaps, had been so loyal as to work the banners of the rebels)—men who had witnessed their hearths enveloped in flames, so different from those that are proverbial of domestic comfort—whose property had fallen a prey to the most wanton rapine—(such were the expressions so common in the mouths of French Canadian members of the House)—pouring their incessant importunities into the ears both of their representatives and the Government. But like the child which, in its simplicity, cried for the moon—they had to cry on. Hope that can be fed on the veriest trifles, was in their case gorged; and promises, that are issued with greater facility even than debentures, were given them, which might have put the ablest compiler of railway-prospectuses to the blush. Nor yet, when their case had been enquired into, and the Commissioners reported £100,000 to be a plaster that would heal every sore—a peculiar something, which would transform the log-hut

that had been, into a frame dwelling—that would exhibit the wonders of arithmetical progression, in the multitude of cattle which, in true Phoenix fashion, would rise from the ashes of their predecessors—a talismanic something, in short, that would convert their wood into ivory, and their iron into silver—not even when this was the case had Hope become a creature of flesh and blood, or promises things that might be shaken in the breeches-pocket.

What shall we say, then? Those in power must either have regarded the claims as unjust, and thus been tricking out deceit in ribands and feathers suited to the taste of the deceived, or they were bullied by pusillanimity. They did regard them as just. Why then were they not *immediately* satisfied? It had in that case been far more preferable, that public credit should have fallen abroad, than that a direr evil should present itself at our own doors—in the State refusing to mitigate grievances which were the work of its own servants. It is the other horn of the dilemma then which probes them. They were pusillanimous, and what commenced in pusillanimity could not but end in folly. They saw that a resolute course in the matter, would act like the winds of spring, on our majestic St. Lawrence:—there would be a rise and a shove: and that if they *were* resolute, the measure would prove to be a nettle of no ordinary character—stinging, though seized with the grasp of a Titan.

But stay, let us benefit by the example of the lion, who, either out of compassion, or thinking it beneath him, allows the jackal to pick the bones of his prey. We must advance to the consideration of a period whose consideration it may be, has betrayed us into untimely censure. Meanwhile, be our scythe ground and sharpened for the rich harvest which nods promisingly in the distance!

As we have said, three years elapsed, before the Rebellion Losses again formed matter of debate in the Legislature, or made the people of Canada feel, that so far from being aborigines, and united in all their interests, they were the descendants of two great hostile nations, and that while a myriad hearts leaped at mention of England, a myriad others felt inexpressible emotions welling up in their bosoms at the bare utterance of *France! la belle France!* It was in February, 1849, that Sir (then Mr.) L. H. Lafontaine moved certain resolutions, which served as a basis for the introduction of the Rebellion Losses Bill proper; which, as it was unfortunate in the causes which made it necessary—*peculiarly* unfortunate in its name, and *most* unfortunate in the effects which it produced, could not claim a

blood-relationship with Misfortune, or recommend itself to the future political tragedian as the *Atreus** of bills, unless it had been equally unfortunate in its prime mover and supporter. In saying this, we would not be understood as slighting the abilities or integrity of one who gives ample proof of both, from the simple fact of his services having commended him to the favour of our beloved Sovereign. We simply mean that it was unfortunate that *he*, of all the members of the House, should have proposed *such* a measure. For we are convinced, that if one had moved the payment of those losses, who had made his way to that House by the aid of but one eye and one leg, and when there could have only enunciated the utterances of a shattered tongue, and enforced those utterances by the gesticulation of but one arm—and supposing that he had sustained these severe losses in quelling that very Rebellion—we are convinced, we say, that the motives of *such* an one even would have been misrepresented. How then could a proposal of such a character be received from one so far concerned in the Rebellion, as to make the Imperial Government believe the climate of Bermuda better suited to his constitution than that of Canada? Indeed, we think it highly creditable to Sir Louis H. Lafontaine, that, though at the risk of incurring so much odium as would inevitably be his, he would not suffer the wrongs of his countrymen to remain unredressed. Supporting what honourable men must acknowledge to be just, he lost all character for what Machiaevil might have styled prudence and wisdom.

On the second reading of the Bill, a stormy debate arose, in which both parties gave full expression to their opinions. The one maintained that persons, who had proved faithless to their sovereign and their country, were to be rewarded for such meritorious conduct: the other contended that justice could hardly be satisfied by the sum proposed. Party spirit was at that time high, and it displayed its omnivorous character, in the consideration of this question, as it does in that of almost every other. Indeed, it has an iron palate, and can find tit-bits and succulent bones equally in tariffs, railway bills, and the bestowal of public charity. Of what possible importance was it in this case, or has it been in a thousand others, whether a legislator belonged to the genus Liberal, or Conservative? Some one, who has brought nice critical acumen to deciding the point of superiority (?) between the *Avenir* and *Mackenzie's Message*, might answer

* It will be remembered that the misfortunes of *Atreus* and his house form the principal theme of the ancient tragedians.

this interrogation, according as it moved him, in a sixpenny pamphlet, or a deadly folio. *We* are content with leaving it a query. Must justice and truth, ever immutable as they are, continue to wear a different aspect to the one and to the other? Or, how comes it that all which emanates from one fountain *must be* bitter, whilst the waters of the other are sweet? Some, indeed, have said that the French Canadian members alone were earnest and sincere in their support of this measure, and that the Ministry practiced a piece of political barter, by giving their assistance in pledge for a disproportionate amount of future aid. It is not our intention to investigate this point. All that we can do, is what is to be done in all cases,—we shall hope to the contrary.

A question, which interested the Legislature so much, could not be unimportant to the country at large. Apart from the animosity of races, which it was so fitted to excite, it possessed one feature in particular, which attracted the attention of all. A large amount of public money was to be paid away; and that, not for any of the ordinary requirements of government, but for an object out of the usual course of things. Now, at any time, men indulge in a curious jealousy with regard to the public purse. Contributing their units, or their tens, they feel entitled to speak of the Province's hundreds of thousands as their own. Many, indeed, go so far as to look upon their country in the light of an extravagant wife—the victim of designing milliners, whose fashions are as changeable as some men's politics, and who, with extreme urbanity, free her from all the trouble of shopping; or, if she *will* shop, take care to make their orders as extensive as those of a country tailor, or Tittlebat Titmouse's valet. Such persons regarded this last demand much as Mr. Caudle would have done an unlawful desire for a Paris bonnet, on the part of his worthy spouse, whilst it recommended itself to all others, on the general ground before mentioned.

But what conduced to augment this jealousy in the minds of the British population, both in the capital and throughout the country, was the settled conviction, into which they had been delusively led, that this money would be far better applied, if sunk at the mouth of the Saguenay, than if set apart for the use intended. No instance was on record of an English Parliament having voted a complimentary address to Tunisian corsairs, for the skill which they displayed in capturing and plundering English merchantmen. All they had received in this shape was the broadsides of Blake, which

probably communicated to their Dey a much longer and clearer light than he had ever before been accustomed to. Nor had Malay or Chinese pirates ever been recompensed for their well-executed piracies, or clever sharp-shooting at man-targets. If such comparisons as these were not brought forward, patriots, falsely so styling themselves, and opposition papers took great care to represent the case in a light of this nature. The fact of Mr. Lafontaine's having proposed the Bill, was not allowed to remain in the dark; and, 'No pay to rebels' became a watchword and a frontlet between the eyes to thousands. Agincourt and Waterloo were mentioned in the same breath, and everything French was held up to contempt, from their eating bull-frogs to their versatility in politics. *Punch in Canada*, a clever, but short-lived, satirical paper, struck upon a rich vein at this time, and amongst his caricatures was one, representing Lafontaine in the act of throwing money bags to rebel *habitans*, from the balcony of the Parliament House. Demagogues and rabid editors asked, if men, who would have revelled in the overthrow of British power—who would have horrified another continent with the awful scenes of a French Revolution—who would have joined with their compatriots in the cool butchery of Lieut. Weir—if such men as these were to be compensated for any losses which *they* had sustained in the Rebellion? More sensible men spoke in character, and put a more just and rational question. How long, it was asked, would these persons have continued to evince their dubious loyalty, had the schemes of their fellows met with any measure of success? Would it have proved as unflinching as that of the British population, who were prepared to resist to the death the efforts of internal sedition, or foreign aggression? Was it not rather cowardly fear that restrained them from rising, the sword in one hand, the torch in the other?

From all that we have said, it may well be imagined that these were times of excitement, quite historical, and altogether such as Bacon would have styled "better for the writer than the liver." And there is one fact which we could wish carefully borne in mind, that though, as was to be expected, this excitement was greatest in the capital, it was by no means confined to its limits. In the Upper Province, the measure was regarded with the greatest dislike, and particular objection was made to paying the Losses out of the consolidated fund of the country. All past history testifies with what a fascinating and deathlike hold lying delusions have seized on men's minds, and this case was destined to be no exception. One who has

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read of Titus Oates' conspiracy, or the occurrences which reached a climax in the tragical end of DeWitt, can conceive to what unbounded lengths of folly men were led, when the notion had once been artfully fixed in their heads that a plan had been deliberately determined on, whereby an immense largess was to be bestowed on the rebels of 1837-'8. What proof is more convincing, than that numbers fancied themselves forsaken by their mother-country, and actually yearned after such a thing as annexation (it's not worth a capital letter) with the neighboring republic? Opinions which might have been natural in an American who had come to the Province to teach "them Britishers what trade was," but unhappily pushed it so far as to become lunatic, were actually broached by persons who in 1837 carried not only arms, but also their lives in their hands, to preserve the honor of their Sovereign and the integrity of the empire.

We must be pardoned for having dwelt at such length on this measure, since the occurrences to which it gave rise, required an investigation into its peculiar nature, without understanding which we might have fallen into errors as grievous as those with which the then Ministry stand chargeable. Suffice it to say, that despite petitions, protests, and more open manifestations of public sentiment, the bill passed both houses. It was now generally thought that it would be reserved for the royal assent; and at this distance of time it strikes us that such would have been the most politic and prudent course. As, however, we have more weighty reasons for condemning the whole conduct of affairs at that time, we will not expatiate on this point, but are content with expressing our simple conviction. Men were speedily undeceived; for, on the inauspicious 25th of April, Lord Elgin went to the House and gave the royal assent to the Rebellion Losses Bill, in conjunction with a new tariff which it was known was to receive the vice-regal signature. (Let us in passing ask whether this transaction, though by no means analogous, does not remind one of the obnoxious measures which the English Commons were wont to tack to money bills?) This proceeding was speedily noised abroad, and to such an extent, that in the short space of time which intervened between its occurrence and the Governor's departure from the House, an immense crowd, consisting chiefly of respectably-dressed persons, had assembled without, and testified its displeasure by egging and stoning Lord Elgin's carriage on his return to Monklands.

This was but the prelude to all that followed, and it would have

been well had that been of as trifling and harmless a character. But one may judge that if there had been displayed delusion, misconception, animosity, and the thousand evils attendant on undue excitement, during the *discussion* of this measure, a worse than bacchanal frenzy must have seized on its opponents, when they found it invested with all that sanctity and power which is comprehended in the term—law. Any one who had heard the distant rumblings of the volcano, could not help suspecting that there might at least be an *attempt* at an eruption (if we may so speak). Was it not to be expected that passions which had before found ample scope for expression in word of mouth, or the sheets of the daily journal, might now find stones, torches, and perhaps the sword, barely adequate to the end desired? Most undoubtedly. But the Ministry did not think so. They seemed to suppose that a parcel of phlegmatic Englishmen and Scotchmen, feeling the severity of the season and the great dearth of excitement at that period of the year, had hit on something wherewith to trouble, and consequently warm and interest themselves; but that they would come to their right minds with the return of spring and its concomitant traffic. Indeed, they (the Ministry) acted much as inquisitors who should expect to see their victim convulsed with agony during the course of his mock-trial, but gaze on each other in mute astonishment, were a single muscle to relax, or the slightest groan to escape his bosom, when subjected to the most excruciating tortures of the rack or pulley. Accordingly, we find that they deemed all special precaution against riotous proceedings (which there was every reason to apprehend) unnecessary; although many capable of giving counsel on this point, if on no other, joined with one in particular (the present Premier),—who had passed through troublous times, and might be expected to be well versed in the probabilities of an analogous period,—in raising a warning voice.

In this instance, as it is in countless others, they were taught that actions are followed by consequences. For the evening of the same day witnessed a turbulent multitude assembled in the Champ-de-Mars, where the authorities might have heard enough to justify their surrounding the Parliament House, and other property likely to be exposed to the fury of the mob, with strong detachments of troops. Unhappily, however, it has generally been the next day, (as in this case,) or perhaps when peaceable citizens were retiring from a place of worship, that this power has been called on to exert its strength. The nature of the forces brought into play at this

meeting, may be judged from their resultant 'To the Parliament House,' a cry which was readily carried into action. First the windows of the House were demolished; next, the mob rushed into the House itself, and committed that wanton destruction which has been the handiwork of such men in all ages and countries; and, lastly, the House itself was discovered to be in flames, which speedily enveloped it from end to end, devouring the justly lamented provincial library, and leaving nothing but what "Punch in Canada" facetiously enough styled—the Elgin marbles.

The origin of this fire is as certainly known as the history of the early Assyrian monarchs, and although several parties were put under arrest, as having been seen communicating it to the building, nothing was made out against them. The probabilities, however, are highly in favour of its having been maliciously fired; and it must have been strange, if, amongst such a number of persons labouring under temporary insanity, there were not to be found two or three prepared to perpetrate such a crime. And yet amidst all this uncertainty, there are two certainties as sure and incontrovertible as the existence of sun and moon. Yes, the Premier may feel less assurance of receiving his salary, than we do that every man, woman, and child in Montreal, had neither entered into a most solemn conspiracy nor yet consummated it, by their each and every one applying a torch to the Parliament House, which stood in this city on the 25th of April, 1849. Yet we were represented in this light by our jealous rivals, and who does not recal the black colours in which we were portrayed? From the would-be-thunderers of that Queen city of the West—Little York—down to the merest bantling of some backwood village, they fluttered their terrific sheets in our faces, all blazing forth in black and ghastly characters—Goths and Vandals—Goths and Vandals!!—Indeed many must have been astonished that all our male children were not born with the hateful name of *Omar** imprinted on their brows; and we must confess that we were ourselves surprised at not hearing it propounded with all due gravity, that we had really *not* burned the library together with the House, but having purloined and divided it by lot, were from day to day fostering our incendiary bodies, or roasting our hecatombs of beeves and lambs, by the heat which its tomes generated. The other certainty (far better grounded than any hopes of permanence which the present coalition may entertain) is, that had those in power shown

* It was *Omar* who burnt the celebrated Alexandrian library.

any degree of that foresight, prudence and firmness which the occasion demanded, three happy consequences would have ensued. The Parliament House might have been standing to this day; many would have been kept from giving vogue to so much unmitigated nonsense as they did on "insecurity of life and property;" and the Governor and ministers themselves would have been spared those insults which galled them to the quick, and were the real originators of the Itinerary system.

The burning of the Parliament House was followed by a succession of outrages, committed by the same mob, on the residences of the Ministers, and other obnoxious persons. Of these there is one only deserving particular notice—the attack on Mr. Lafontaine's house, in which a young man, accompanying the mob, was shot, by parties defending that Minister's residence. One can easily imagine what a combination of feelings this produced in the minds of the mob, as also how greatly it conduced to add oil and naphtha, as it were, to the fire already kindled. The unfortunate youth was represented as a martyr, and the citizens were accordingly requested to attend his funeral, *en masse*, in blood-red placards, posted through the streets. The inquest held on his body, by its uncommon length, and the consequent suspense with which it racked the public mind, raised the unhappy passions of the time to their highest pitch: and a verdict was anxiously awaited by the rioting public, in hopes of a true bill for murder being returned by the jury against the mover of the Rebellion Losses Bill. They were disappointed, however, and evinced their virtuous indignation after a fashion peculiarly their own—by setting fire to the building in which the inquest had been prosecuted. By this time the authorities had learnt several costly lessons at the hands of the mob, and it would have been marvellous indeed if they had not received some benefit from them. Whether it be not more to their discredit than their credit, they *had*; accordingly, we find that Mr. Lafontaine was, on that occasion, conveyed to a place of safety by a strong guard of soldiers: and if this precaution had not been adopted, there is much reason to doubt whether his grey hairs would this day be an honour to the Bench.

Consider now what double this force might have effected, if used at the proper time and place—(when the mob set out to sack Mr. Lafontaine's house.)* The mob would have laboured under a much

* One might be led to suppose that a Montreal mob is the most uncontrollable of any, from the fact of the soldiers being so frequently called out to disperse

less amount of guilt; Mason's blood would not have been shed; we consequently would have been spared the torturing inquest, and its consequences: and what many would be apt to prize most, the bill of damages brought against the city, would have been considerably lessened. Truly, if words fitly spoken, be "as apples of gold set in pictures of silver," what shall we say of timely action?

On reviewing these disturbances, we are compelled to remark that they were astonishingly few and trifling, if we will but consider the peculiar nature of that measure, whose ratification occasioned them, and the shameful lack of vigour displayed in the non-exertion of that authority which might have most effectually prevented them. A beast of prey, after severe and prolonged hunger, seldom contents himself with but *one* victim, and is then quickest at finding out when a gun merely snaps.

• Occurrences less serious, and, in fact, somewhat amusing, such as are peculiar to these periods, were not wanting. A passion for effigy-burning pervaded all classes, from the merchant to the school-boy; whilst the Governor's carriage was greeted with showers of rotten eggs, and even with missiles of a more formidable character, on the few occasions on which it made its appearance. This latter we class amongst the less serious order; not that we at all approve of it, but because it was really not worth the consideration bestowed on it in high quarters. It was the very least that was to be expected on the passage of a highly obnoxious measure, and should not have wounded Lord Elgin's sensibility so deeply as it undoubtedly did. Who ever concerns himself much because a hog chanches to emit a contemptuous sort of grunt in passing him, and who would not know how to deal with it, were it to impede his course, or offer to show its tusks?

This treatment, (so much to be expected, and that should have been experienced but to be despised) combined with other motives best known to himself, induced Lord Elgin to tender the resignation of his office to the Government of Great Britain. The account of the burning of the Parliament House, and of attempts at an annexation movement having reached that country at the same time, fears were entertained of another 1837. Indeed, the general belief there

it. Such is not the case, however; and it was only the utter inefficiency of the Police, (who were competent, perhaps, to arrest a drunken man, or a *few* greater offenders,) that occasioned any necessity for the use of the military. It is but justice to say, that the Police have of late been either better managed, more numerous, or more courageous.

(that is, so far as any concerned themselves about the matter) seemed to be, that the inhabitants of Montreal generally had revelled in the destruction of the House and Library; and not that it was the work of two or three miscreants, who idly fancied they were doing the people a service. Hence it is that Montreal is merely known to many in England as that place, where they (Ah! you indefinite little rogue!) burned down the Parliament House. In answer to His Excellency's request, the Home Government entirely approved of his conduct, in relation to the Rebellion Losses Bill, and desired him to continue his Administration. Their wish was complied with, and that very summer witnessed the consummation of the first grand design under this new lease of power. The present system of Itinerary Parliaments had been determined on, and by the aid of carpenters, forwarders, and a most liberal allowance of public money, the Seat of Government was transferred from this hated spot to Toronto. The same means were, two years afterwards, found quite adequate to accomplish the same end, by transferring it to Quebec; and now their utility for this purpose is put beyond question by the admirable way in which they performed their several duties, in the late transportation of Government traps and tape from Quebec to Toronto. Surely, if there can still be the slightest imperfection in their working, let it be done away with in a final and triumphal conveyance of the Parliamentary paraphernalia to Montreal.

And now, if this system can by any possibility have its supporters, (yet, who knows but it may? Such propositions as the separation of these two Provinces, and the abolition of capital punishment, meet with acceptance in some quarters,) if this system ever had supporters, they have had ample opportunity to point out its uses, its beauties, and the untold benefits it has conferred on the country. Time, means, opportunity,—all, in fact, that the most sanguine projectors demand for the successful development of their schemes have been lavished upon it. And yet, what has it effected? Has it poured unceasing streams of wealth into the Provincial coffers? Answer, O ye packers, carpenters, carters, and forwarders! Has it contributed to raise the dignity and honor of our country? Ask the foreigner who heard we had a capital once, but did not know what sort of a thing had since served as a substitute. Has it strengthened the laws or made them a greater terror to evil doers? Has it effected anything, in short, enabling us to indulge a just pride, anything that can make us look up to it with reverence, and to its originators with admiration?

When the house is tottering over our head, we do not look for the cause in the *attics*; still less if the gilded cornice in the parlor be cracked, do we conclude *that* to be the cause. No, without examining, we may rest assured that the foundation must be deficient, unstable, rotten. So, in this case we are irresistibly led to condemn the first step that was taken by moving the Seat of Government from Montreal as *utterly unjustifiable and uncalled for*. But (to let Goliath wear his ponderous sword and armour of seeming proof, that his discomfiture may be the more inglorious) we grant there was occasion for adopting such a course, but ask with the tone of a man who finds he has yielded too much, why an Alp of folly was piled on a mole-hill by fixing on an *itinerary* system of Parliaments?

The simple recital of what led to the former, furnishes ample food for reflection on its folly and injustice. The results of the latter (the most appreciable being its expense, over £150,000*) as they have made themselves sensibly felt are equally rich in the reflections to which they give rise. And though we might with all safety leave the reader to judge for himself, we shall preserve the propriety of our pamphlet's title, by devoting its remaining pages to such reflections as we have been drawn into by the contemplation of these periods and events.

First, then, let us consider the unjustifiableness and inexpedience of having at all removed the Seat of Government from Montreal. And here it may be as well for the author to premise, that he is neither a householder nor a hotel-keeper, nor yet a picture fancier who has laid up a hoard of paintings, in hopes of profiting by that taste for the fine arts which is generally supposed peculiarly to appertain to capitals. Although, as must appear, he is attached to Montreal, and desirous of its advancement in prosperity and honor, his object, so far as that city is concerned, is not to contribute any little assistance which he can bring to its re-establishment as the capital of Canada, but to aid in blotting out the unjust aspersions which have been cast upon it with regard to this matter. His heart's wish is to witness the *speedy* abolition of the Itinerary system; and when that has been decided on, and a choice must be made, he feels

* We only say, over £150,000; although one who ought to have correct information in these matters, has assured us that twice that sum would not be an overstatement. However this may be, we hope to show that if the expense had been but £5000, there would still be as just ground for the most severe censure.

convinced that the natural and commercial centre of Canada possesses such qualifications as will at least enable it to vie with all competitors.

But to our point. What was there to justify this change? Insecurity of life and property was, and has been the plea most solemnly and defiantly shaken in our faces. Now, life and property are undoubtedly things on which we should set a high value; and the latter especially, it would appear, since so many are ready to risk the former in its acquisition and preservation. This plea then is worthy of some consideration. Insecurity of life and property! These words are of sad and terrible import, and we shall not attempt to deny their truth in the present instance. Property was insecure; life was insecure (but infinitely less so.) And so they were in London, in the time of Wat Tyler, in the Lord George Gordon riots, and during the passage of the Reform Bill. Yes, they were ten times more insecure than they ever were in Montreal. For authority raised its arm, brandished its sword and used it too; but all to little purpose. The fury of the mob had to wear itself out. Yet how strange it is that we do not read of the Court and Parliament adopting a system of alternate progresses between Bristol and Liverpool! *This* was reserved for the Colonial enlightenment of an age that delights in boasting of its railroads and telegraphs, and can therefore laugh to scorn the wisdom of its forefathers, who, besides thinking murder worthy of death, (and acting up to their conviction too,) really had not opened their dull eyes to the infinite utility and beauty of the Itinerary system of Parliaments. We will now imagine a case in which insecurity of life and property would have afforded just ground for such a course as was pursued. Let us suppose that Parliament had, in that very session, been passing a succession of measures for fostering the trade of Montreal—had given immense grants for the completion of its public works; and that yet (if such a thing were possible) its citizens had risen as one man, those of French and those of British origin vying with each other in taking the lives of their benefactors, or giving their House and its contents to the flames. In such a case as this, we say that the removal of the Seat of Government would be a necessary step, and but the first that ought to be taken in the punishment of such criminals.

How different the realities of the present case! A Bill passes, calculated, as we have seen, to work upon passions which, when ennobled, nerve men to mount the scaffold, or endure the horrors of

the stake, but which, if wrongly appealed to, follow the course of nature, by leading men to the heights of folly, or degrading them to the depths of wanton wickedness. What was to be expected but insecurity of life and property? The sailor, when he has once seen the black cloudlet in the West, smaller than a man's hand, no longer beholds the sun that shines over-head in unclouded splendour—the waves tripping merrily by—the graceful fluttering of his pennants. To his eye the heavens are obscured—he is now on the mountain peak, now in the valley, and the tornado is rattling through his cordage, whilst lightnings play around his mast-head. He secures what canvas he has, and gets in readiness what lies in the hold. The hurricane overtakes him, but he is *prepared*. The Ministry, however, gained no reputation for political seamanship at this time, as has been previously shown; they did not make allowance for any extra strain on their vessel; they did not turn her head to the wind, and their captain (Lord E. of course) was evidently astonished and disgusted at finding such winds in these latitudes. He seemingly imagined this to be no fitful gust, but what would recur at stated seasons, and with such regularity that it would be worthy of a special almanac; instead of which, it was what he would have encountered on either of the two tacks on which he afterwards sailed. And this latter fact is noteworthy; for the general character of the measure and the associations connected with it were such as would (and in fact did) rouse the same passions in the breasts of the British population throughout the Province. Had Parliament been sitting at Toronto, we do not hesitate to say that there would have been tenfold more indignation and riot; and indeed we very much doubt whether the Rebellion Losses Bill would ever have passed. What further insight we thus obtain into the manifest injustice of the pusillanimous act on which we are called to animadvert! Did ever man whose throat had been grazed by another's razor, lavish kindness on one who had only been too glad to aid in the murderous design, by sharpening the instrument of death?

Insecurity of life and property! To what extent, pray? Was it general, and such that the honest and thrifty tradesman retired to rest, his mind filled with doubts as to whether the morrow would find a house over his head, and his family circle unbroken? Had an emigration from the city commenced, such as took place amongst the Englishry of Ireland when Tyroonne! was helping to blow the infernal organ of that vilest man in the three kingdoms,—James II.?

Was every second house a charred ruin or a windfall to the glaziers? We hardly believe the *Pilot* even, would go so far as to maintain any of these interrogatories to be truths. There was one instance only* in which life was really insecure, but happily, that too, was the most triumphant proof of the security with which life and property might have been invested by the exertion of adequate and timely authority. Of private property, a few houses, occupied by ministers and other obnoxious parties, were either wholly or partially destroyed. The expense of all this riot fell, of course, on the city, and was paid to the last tittle, so that there was no ground for complaint on this point.

It is the burning of the Parliament House, however, that has formed the chief stumbling-block, and this it is which has been laid to the charge of every peaceable citizen of Montreal who has argued the question with any one. "Ah! but you burnt the Parliament House" is the incessantly borous charge with which our ears have been dinned. Now that we may avoid being borous too, by showing that where thousands might have joined in egging the Governor, there could not have been ten who saw the burning leaves of the Provincial library flying through the air, with sentiments of joy and pride,—and that where a hundred finding themselves unrestrained might be inclined to sack the House, there could be but one or two of such persons even, so insane as to set fire to it,—we shall content ourselves with saying that all blame in the matter rests with those who had thus allowed the bull to get into the china-shop. Once in, there was no telling what he would *not* do: whether suddenly acquiring a nice discriminating taste, he might rush at piles of Staffordshire, but spare the more delicate workmanship of Sèvres; or whether, retaining his bovine nature in its strict integrity, he would shiver all alike to fragments.

But Montreal must feel what it was to commit such outrages. Undoubtedly; just as a fine was levied on a Saxon hundred when the perpetrators of some heinous crime were not to be discovered. Consider that two-thirds of the citizens are of French origin, proverbial for their domesticity and peaceableness, and that on this particular occasion, their feelings were at complete variance with those of the mob; and the waterspout that has all along been increasing in volume and density, bursts over the heads of those who were instrumental in disturbing the government of the country when it had

* That of Sir Louis H. Lafontaine already referred to.

been most happily fixed permanently. Nothing strikes one more forcibly than the utter disproportionment of the punishment to the crime. Is this one of the purposes which a capital is intended to subserve? Was Montreal raised to the rank of a metropolis for any particular merit of its own? Was it to be continued as such, during good conduct only, or, as it ought to have been, as long as there was ought to govern? If we mistake not, a capital is the place where lawlessness ought to experience the power of law—where, as being the spot whence they are dispensed to all, the blessings of government and order should be most strikingly exemplified; a place where authority should stalk abroad with haughty mien and powerful arm; where sensibility should find no abiding place in high quarters, and where legal power should have free scope for displaying its absolute invincibility.

On reviewing the motives which can have inclined the Ministry to this change, we are convinced that any concern for the public interest had no share in them whatever, as compared with the oversensibility of the Governor, and the spleen of the Ministers themselves. Whatever Lord Elgin's admirers can say in praise of his administration, (and there is much to be said) we hope that the most devoted will not presume to shield him from the charge of having evinced a remarkable lack of firmness, amounting almost to pusillanimity, in that portion of it which has fallen under our notice. One is irresistibly led to ask, if this be he who would fain aspire to the rule of our Indian Empire? And his detractors would be apt to say that it smacks of the conduct of one, who could compliment the citizens of Portland on the absence of wine from their public dinners, and yet censure such wishy-washy comfort, when dining with the merchants and baillies of groggy Glasgow. *Punch in Canada's* celebrated satire of the lordly occupant of Monklands putting his baronial keep into a state of defence, at sight of an old woman carrying a basket of eggs, of course, partakes of the general character of satire, in being overdrawn, but is nevertheless essentially truthful.

Without having borne the cares of the country in our breast, or on our brow, who does not know what a hard thing it is to undergo ridicule and contemptuous ill-usage? Yet it must be as equally and generally known how we are eased of the burden, and freed from the pain, when we realize that we are suffering such things at the hands of worthless and deluded men, and that in the cause of uprightness and justice. This consolation might have borne up their drooping

spirits, if they were really wanting in that callousness, which public life is supposed to generate in public men. But no; eggs, stones, and pasquinades were to be got rid of in a much easier way. Moving up and moving on, and thus making the mountain come to Mahomet, instead of Mahomet's going to the mountain, was the method pitched upon by these sorely-trying, these egg-stricken men. Pusillanimity, indecision, folly, are all branded in broadest characters on their every action in relation to this matter, and we are reminded of a garrison that abandons a well-provisioned and impregnable fortress, on merely being repulsed in a sortie—not of the wary and plodding Hollander, who, instead of allowing his meadows and corn fields to be submerged, deepens his dykes, and strengthens his sea-walls on every fresh encroachment of an aggressive ocean.

In expressing a few reflections on our second point—the folly shewn in adopting the *Itinerary* system—we grant that our conduct as a city was of such a character, as our many and bitter enemies are fond of representing it in the most virulent tirades, which lack of common sense, and a taste for the slanderous, enable them to concoct. Montreal deserved punishment, and what she did meet with, in the removal of the Seat of Government, was by no means equal to the enormity of her crimes. And yet, granting this, there are queries clamouring for a response. Was the *Itinerary* system adopted with a view to making us feel our loss more severely, by periodically tantalizing our eyes with a sight of the governmental aquatic procession—by probing an old wound, as it were;—or, was judgment tempered with mercy, in their thus leaving us, what too many are forced to subsist on,—hopes for the future?

The fact of the matter is, that the policy followed out by Lord Elgin and the Ministry is a mantling cream of absurdity, which rises to the surface, and is to be seen and tasted by all that will. And if the *cream* of their political dairy was absurdity, what shall we denominate their *milk* when skimmed and blue? Absurdity must encounter absurdity. Accordingly, as we have never heard anything worthy the name of reason or expedience advanced in support of the *Itinerary* system of Parliaments, we are compelled to embark on a sea of hypothesis. Was some astrologer consulted, who gave out mystical forebodings as to the prolongation of patronage to Toronto beyond the space of two, and to Quebec beyond the space of four years? Perhaps it was thought that these periodical peregrinations might shake off the mould and dust which *will* accumulate about

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things human and stationary. Some would say that the landlords and grocers of the two *capitalets* were behind the scenes in the character of wire-pullers. Others might advance a contending theory of this nature. That, as politicians frequently see reason to bid good-by to the settled convictions and opinions of a whole past life—(especially when such a feather's weight consideration unbars the avenue of advancement, and thus enables them to turn into some one of the goodly mansions with which it is lined)—a change of air and scene would greatly facilitate this metamorphosis.

To have done with absurdity, we shall express a simple conviction which we irresistibly entertain, after contemplating the conduct of the Governor, Ministry, and all who acquiesced in this wantonly foolish step, viz.:—That they should have deemed a change necessary is allowable; but that they had neither the courage, nor the prudence to fix on some permanent capital, *were it in the midst of the wilds of Anticosti*, exhibited to the world a spectacle ludicrously interesting:—Pusillanimity thrusting courage out of doors by the head and shoulders; Folly throwing dust in the eyes of the owl of Minerva; and wounded Sensibility entreating the aid of the London police.

Of the results of this proceeding we shall notice the most appreciable only—its expense. The successive migrations between Montreal and Toronto—Toronto and Quebec—Quebec and Toronto, were accomplished at the expenditure of over £150,000 of public money;—a sum worse than thrown away, if, (as an Upper Canadian will maintain,) the piers below Quebec are in reality so much money sunk in the St. Lawrence. But we suppose, the Torontonians, since the general result of all the expenditure is the presence of the Government in their beloved city, are prepared to demonstrate that no money has ever been more wisely laid out than that which has effected the admirable feat which their eyes behold.

£150,000. These speak to us in the plain and unmistakeable tone of figures and facts. It requires no intimate acquaintance with the cabala of political science to form a conception of the sum of £150,000, and as little, perhaps, to understand on what it was expended, and why. The merchant, who has just paid duty on his hundred hogsheads of sugar, (the produce of a sister colony, it may be,) *realizes* it; the poor stir it up with their tea and their coffee; the rich drink it in their wine. All must have felt it; not that we are over-taxed, or over-tariffed, nor yet that it has formed the largest

item in the Provincial expenditure, *but because it has been uncalled-for, unnecessary, and* PRODUCTIVE OF NO GENERALLY BENEFICIAL RESULT. Productive of no generally beneficial *result*, we say; for some might maintain that after all it matters little whether this sum, or a greater, has been disbursed, since it finds its way back again into the people's pockets. So it is with public works, too. Although contractors may, by collusion with those in power, reap unreasonable profits from their construction, we must, if we adopted this absurd reasoning, allow them to go on from worse to worse, on the ground that these men would, of course, have to diffuse their money, in order to supply their luxuries or wants. But consider, if we grant the principle to be a true one, what advantage rests on the side of public works. There is in that case something to shew for what has been expended. If the Ottawa and Huron Canal be ever made, and there should be finesse and corruption on the largest scale in its construction, these will be soon forgotten, whilst the Canal itself will exist for the advantage of future ages, and cause our remotest descendants to bless that foresight, which looked away from the present to the distant future. What, however, is there to show for the tens of thousands wasted on Itinerary Parliaments? Less than the shadow of smoke. We suppose that all who hold that very peculiar tenet of political economy, which we are noticing, would find it quite proper and convenient, if they were Members of Parliament, to carry it out by voting themselves a bonus of £500 at the close of each session. When they attempted such a thing, they would soon find reason to desist; and we shall desist from handling them any further, after recommending the following general principle to a more careful consideration than they seem willing to pay to the interests of their country. Men will give away their money for the pleasure it affords them in seeing what it helps to effect; but when their money is taken from them, whether they will or not, few are pleased at seeing it melt into air, or, what is worse, into other people's pockets.

We are not of those who delight in expatiating on the various uses to which this money might have been put, or we might stroll very agreeably (to ourselves at least) in the expansive field thus opened. The inhabitant of Montreal who entertains just views on the subject which we treat, would have had the Government here still; he would have had a sister building to our Court House erected instead of the two burnt down in Quebec, and the expensive repairs required at Toronto. He would have made Monklands a

spot of magnificence and beauty, instead of the two papered and whitewashed *caravanserais* which served Lord Elgin as his Kensington and Balmoral whilst he turned his back on the Canadian St. James. The friends of the Grand Trunk Railway (together with the true friends of the Province) would have had six piers of the Victoria Bridge peering in contemptful grandeur over the frozen St. Lawrence,—the first that had braved his icy might, and ever reminding one of what in 1849 should have been the conduct of Lord Elgin and his ministerial advisers. The peaceable citizens of Toronto would have erected a special penitentiary for the use of their rowdy-ridden city; and, indeed, there is not a municipality in Canada that could not have applied every copper of it to its own particular wants and improvements.

And now it is but justice to add, that attempts have been made to abolish this most absurd system; a somewhat satirical motion has been made with regard to it, in the House, as most will remember; and if the press expresses the sentiments of the people, there would seem to be a general yearning after some fixed capital. It is, moreover, rather amusing to see the way in which the journals of every town of the least importance exhibit its special fitness for the purpose in view. Some have rummaged the mortality statistics, and triumphantly insist on the *salubrity* of their "*favorita*;" others, again, insist on the *security* of theirs in the event of the country's being invaded; whilst others that are quite desperate, will combine with these two gaudy colours every other which they think will make up an attractive picture. Toronto rests on the security of present possession, and we have actually seen a Kingston editor, writing of its (Kingston's) system of railway being soon completed, as one of the advantages, which that rising village presents! Come, Blue Bonnets and Vaudreuil, step into the rank of competitors. You, too, have a system of railways. You have been foolishly fancying that the track merely passed through your streets. But no; the great lines of the Eastern States, connecting with the Grand Trunk at Portland, and the whole net of railways from that point, were made to pour commerce into *your* laps.

An elephant was one day swimming across a river, when a fly that had been long on the wing chanced to alight on his head. As soon as the fly had rested himself, he commenced to soliloquize on his immense consequence in the kingdom of nature. Here was this monstrous beast with his prodigious strength and wonderful sagacity,

created for *his* sole use and benefit whenever he should deign to avail himself of him. He next cast his eye up to the heavens, and could not repress self-gratulation, when he beheld that vast expanse which had been formed for his covering, and that sun placed there to give him light and heat. He would have proceeded to further extravagancies, but that the elephant at this point felt occasion for submerging his head: which motion in its commencement, the unwitting fly took for homage that his carrier was paying on finding *whom* it was that he sustained; but when the declination of his head had exceeded what was to be expected from an Oriental even, he began to entertain astonishment, which was on the increase, when it terminated in sudden death.

From the award of the apple by Paris, to the distribution of prizes at the latest poultry show, the decisions of the judges have been called in question, and ignorance and impartiality have consequently been laid to their charge. That Parliament, therefore, whose honour it shall be, to appoint Canada a fixed metropolis, must expect to meet with fretful and angry gusts from every disappointed quarter. This, however, will not prevent it if it be composed of sensible and honourable men from setting aside that unhappy distinction into Upper and Lower Canada—from abandoning every party-consideration—and from fixing on some place which Canada has already reason to be proud of, and that will, not on its metropolitan investiture be bearing the first-fruits of its honour.

We have thus viewed the system of Itinerary Parliaments in its origin, its unjustifiableness, and in its results; and what impresses our own mind most, is, that after all, the system has not proved absolutely ruinous to the country. We mean that, although in considering it, much lamentable pusillanimity and indecision has come to light, which has resulted in an unnecessary waste of the public money—it is not one of those long-established evils which curse a country by their next to irremediableness—or, which present such formidable obstacles to their abolition in a considerable portion of the people aiming at their prolongation. There is a happy unanimity of feeling on the subject, and the author trusts that the opinions which he has formed in regard to it, will not be found at variance with those of his countrymen who have been so indulgent as to favour these pages with their kind perusal.

And now, my countrymen, as we opened our subject with a few reflections on the grounds which we possess for entertaining senti-

ments of public pride and contentment, we will do well, in conclusion, to hint at those evils, which to be avoided, demand the most watchful caution. We must, in the first place, then, carefully and constantly discourage any hopes of annexation which our neighbours may still entertain—we must give their last lingering expectations a stab under the fifth rib; and we must further allow none of the *defects* of their Republican system to engraft themselves on our institutions. Our franchise must not be so extended as to give worthless and ignorant wretches, (who know little else than the way to their mouths, and the most desirable weight and shape of a bludgeon,) a fatal share in the government of our country. We shall thus be preserved from elective judgeships, and the abolition of capital punishment. We should rather allow the Catholics a separate fund—and let it be over large—than—be dragging on a deathlike sort of life, by having no thorough system of Normal and Common School education. We must repress the jealousies of our large cities, and understand that it is a grievous fallacy to suppose, that because expensive public works are being prosecuted in their neighbourhood, it is for the particular benefit of those cities, and not for the general good of the Province, that they are being carried on. Believing this, we cannot but inveigh against that injustice which would distribute the burden of the cost so unequally. We must have no lack of prudence, equity and promptness displayed in the final disposal of the Clergy Reserves and Seignorial Tenure questions. We must have no speculation in public land or public money, and every instance of the kind should meet with immediate and ignominious exposure. Trade is to be encouraged,—manufactures are to be fostered, and internal improvements must be carried on; but all after such patterns as the size of our cloth will allow. We must join heart and hand in opposing the least laxity in the punishment of offenders;—and above all, we must eject that false philanthropy out of our borders, which has made capital punishment but a name, and may this very day be encouraging the coolly designing murderer as he sharpens his axe, or concocts a more deadly poison.

It would be presumptuous, in a person of the Author's inexperience, to point out the means for avoiding each and every one of these evils. He would, therefore, in parting from his readers, suggest one that will ever stand us in stead, whether as a nation, or as individuals,—a most hearty acknowledgment of God, the bestower of all good, in our every action, whether public or private.